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THE BIOLOGICAL STATION AT FAIRPORT, IOWA, AS AN AGENCY FOR PUBLIC SERVICE ¹

THE U. S. Fisheries Biological Station at Fairport, Iowa, combines in a somewhat unique way the functions of a fisheries biological station and a fish-cultural experiment station. Its functions include the propagation and investigation of fresh-water mussels, the conduct of fish-cultural experiment work, investigation of various fresh-water fishery problems, and the promotion both of a fuller utilization of aquatic products and of a broader and more efficient interest in the protection of aquatic resources. With its admirable building, its extensive equipment of ponds and its general environment, it offers unusually favorable conditions for all manner of biological investigations, and the Bureau of Fisheries invites university biologists to avail themselves of the opportunities there afforded for independent research work.

The primary functions of the station are characteristically ecological. In mussel propagation it deals directly with that striking symbiotic relation existing between fish and mussels, the fish being essential to the development of mussels and the mussels promoting, in part directly, and perhaps in greater part indirectly, the food supply of fishes. As a fish-cultural experiment station, it is concerned not so much with fish as with that complex association of fish, insects, molluscs, crustacea, algæ, and other animals and plants, all of which are intimately interrelated and in turn dependent upon physical and chemical conditions of water, bottom soil and land environment—an association which we call in

¹ The functions and opportunities of the Station as expressed by leaders in the dedicatory exercises and conference held at Fairport, Iowa, in October, 1920, are given in this paper, in connection with an account of the exercises and the conference.